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UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AS A DAKWAH BIL-HASANAH STRATEGY IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS TO PRODUCE NAHDATUL ULAMA CADRES IN SUKABUMI, WEST JAVA

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Abstract: Islamic boarding schools have a central role in educating and producing competent ulama in Indonesia, to Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization. However, in the era of globalization and digitalization, Islamic boarding schools in Sukabumi face various complex challenges. One of the main problems is how to ensure that the *bil hasanah da'wah* method remains relevant and effective amidst rapid social, cultural and technological changes. This research aims to analyze the *bil hasanah da'wah* strategy implemented by one of the Islamic boarding schools in producing Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) ulama cadres in Sukabumi, West Java. This research uses a qualitative approach and data collection techniques in the form of semi-structured interviews with the administrators of one of the modern Islamic boarding schools in Sukabumi, West Java and 5 alumni of the Islamic boarding school as a form of triangulation. 'Utilization of information technology' is the main theme obtained from data analysis. Thus, the use of information technology is a strategic step to improve the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools to produce competent da'wah cadres.

Keywords: Information, technology, da'wah, strategy, cadres.

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INTRODUCTION

In the continuously evolving digital era, information technology plays an increasingly vital role in various aspects of life, including in the fields of da'wah (Islamic preaching) and education in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). The title of this research highlights the utilization of information technology as a strategy for da'wah bilhasanah (preaching with goodness) by pesantren in producing NU scholars in Sukabumi, West Java.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Information Technology

Information technology is the means and infrastructure, systems, or methods for acquiring, transmitting, processing, interpreting, storing, organizing, and meaningfully using data.

The main function of information technology in da'wah

Information technology (IT) serves as a tool for communication and information dissemination, education and learning, interaction and discussion, management of religious activities, publication, and documentation.

The Benefits of Information Technology in Dawah

Information technology (IT) brings many benefits in supporting and expanding da'wah in this digital era, including reaching a wider audience, being more effective and efficient, easily accessing various Islamic knowledge sources, saving costs and resources, and allowing the community to actively participate in da'wah activities through interactive platforms. They can provide feedback, ask questions, and engage in discussions.

Strategy of Preaching with Goodness

Dakwah bilhasanah is one of the methods of da'wah in Islam, which means conveying religious teachings in a good, wise, and prudent manner. *Dakwah bilhasanah* comes from the Arabic words 'dakwah', meaning call or invitation, and 'hasanah' meaning good or virtue. In this context, *dakwah bilhasanah* refers to a da'wah approach that emphasizes goodness, gentleness, and wisdom in delivering religious messages. Allah SWT says in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl: 125.

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Meaning: "Call (people) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is guided" (QS. An-Nahl: 125).

Islamic Boarding School

Pesantren is the oldest educational institution in Indonesia, which has undeniably produced many ulama. Historical research shows that pesantren in the archipelago have existed since the 13th-17th centuries, and in Java since the 15th-16th centuries AD, coinciding with the arrival of Islam in Indonesia (Mastuhu, 1994). There are several elements of pesantren that distinguish

it from other institutions, namely: (1) pondok, a place where students stay, (2) santri: students, (3) masjid: a place of worship and center of pesantren activities, (4) kyai: a person who is knowledgeable in religion and possesses charisma, (5) kitab kuning: a main reference in Islamic studies (Dhofier, 1982). Initially, pesantren education was non-classical, where a kyai taught Islam based on texts from the medieval period (Prasidjo & Al, 2001). Studies often focus on fiqh, tafsir, and Arabic to delve into religious knowledge. The fiqh studied is generally influenced by the Shafi'i school and other schools of thought, along with Sufism from al-Ghazali and al-Ariyyah, although there are many other Sufi figures or Sufi teachings (Bruinessen, 1995). According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the number of pesantren in Indonesia is dominated by provinces on the island of Java. West Java has 12,121 pesantren, East Java has 6,745 pesantren, Banten has 6,423 pesantren, and Central Java has 5,084 pesantren. The latest number of pesantren in Sukabumi Regency, according to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Sukabumi Regency on the page <https://sukabumikab.bps.go.id/2020/01/30>, is 661 pesantren.

Ulama Cadre

Ulama are placed as the elite of the people, figures who understand Islam and serve as role models for the community. '*Innama al ulama' waratsah al anbiya'* (indeed, scholars are the heirs of the prophets). This expression carries a broad meaning, whether viewed from the perspective of knowledge, depth of understanding, mental attitude, or the functions and roles they assume. The integration of knowledge and morality (*akhlaq al-karimah*) possessed by ulama becomes something that must be practiced among the people in the form of teaching, guidance, addressing emerging issues, and concrete actions (daily good deeds)."

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was founded on January 31, 1926, corresponding to 16 Rajab 1334 H, in Surabaya by K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari along with traditional scholars and entrepreneurs in East Java. The establishment of NU was preceded by the founding of Nahdlatuttujjar (1918) as a rural economic movement institution, followed by the emergence of Taswirul Afkar (1922) as a scientific and cultural movement, and Nahdatul Watan (1924) as a political movement in the form of education. Thus, three important pillars for NU are found: (1) People's Economic Insight, (2) Scientific, Socio-Cultural Insight, and (3) National Insight. Nahdlatul Ulama has become one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia and has pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) spread across Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach on several pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Sukabumi. Data collection is carried out through in-depth interviews with one of the pesantren caretakers, teaching staff, students, and alumni who have become NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) scholars, as well as participatory observation and analysis of documents related to the use of information technology in pesantren.

Tabel Coding

Informant	Use of Information Technology, Strategy of Dakwah Bilhasanah	Information Technology				
		Fb	IG	Youtube	Tik Tok	Website
Ponpes Supervisor	v	v	v	v	v	v
Teacher	v	v	v	v	v	v
Student	v	v	v	v	-	-
Alumnae	v	v	v	v	v	-

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research results, it shows that information technology and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube play a significant role in spreading Islamic teachings. In addition, some Islamic boarding schools also have official websites used to provide information about their activities, Islamic articles, and online studies. The use of information technology by boarding schools in Sukabumi provides several significant benefits, including: (1) Broader Information Access: Information technology allows boarding schools to reach a wider audience, not only locally but also in various regions, and even internationally. (2) Improved Educational Quality: With digital materials, the quality of education in boarding schools can be enhanced as students have access to a more diverse range of learning resources. (3) Management Efficiency: Management information systems help boarding schools manage operations more efficiently, allowing them to focus on developing students and spreading teachings.

CONCLUSION

The utilization of information technology as a dakwah strategy bilhasanah (with good manners) in Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren) in Sukabumi, West Java, has shown positive results in improving the effectiveness and quality of education in these institutions to produce competent dakwah cadres. However, there are still several challenges that need to be addressed so that the utilization of information technology can be more optimal. Support from various parties, including the government and society, in the form of organizing information technology training, is crucial to support the efforts of pesantren in developing information technology as a tool for dakwah and education.

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